

Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs is saving millions of dollars a year simply by negotiating drug prices on behalf of our country's veterans. Just imagine how much more affordable drugs would be if the Federal Government could negotiate for lower prices on behalf of our country's 40 million seniors.

Seniors who need help affording their monthly prescription drug bills deserve to be heard.

House Democrats not only support requiring Medicare to negotiate lower prices with the drug companies, we also favor allowing for the safe reimportation of less expensive drugs from abroad. These are real solutions. Let us finally put our seniors first and help them afford their prescription drugs.

HELPING AMERICAN SENIORS MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the Census Bureau estimates that more than 36 million Americans are over the age of 65, making them members of the fastest growing age group in our country. Under the able leadership of Chairman BUCK McKEON, House Republicans are working to ensure the quality and effectiveness of Federal programs designed to help America's elderly.

Today, I am proud to speak in support of the Senior Independence Act of 2006, which proposes several necessary reforms to help older individuals avoid institutional care, improve their health services, and have access to employment-based training programs. By reviewing and modernizing programs established over 50 years ago, we are helping to ensure that America's government programs actually address the needs of today's seniors.

This bill will help ensure America's seniors live healthier and happier lives.

In conclusion, our sympathies are with the families of Private Thomas Tucker and Private Kristian Menchaca. God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

WE NEED A LIVABLE WAGE

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, somebody asked me the other day how do you strengthen the economy, and I said to them that you strengthen it by putting additional money into the hands and the pockets of those at the economic bottom. If they get an additional dollar or two, what are they going to do with it? They are going to buy milk, Cream of Wheat, oatmeal, pay the utility bill, maybe some gasoline for an automobile, if they still

have one. They will put it right back into the economy.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, we need a livable wage. Money to the economy is like blood to the body. If too much of it is on one side, you will have a stroke. Our economy has a stroke because too much of the money is in the hands of too few people. We need a livable wage.

WE MADE THE RIGHT DECISION

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, for decades, America and free countries in Europe, Africa and Southeast Asia have been the targets of terrorism, terrorism that originated in the Middle East and has been if not openly supported by countries there then at the very least overlooked by these nations.

On September 11, we decided that periodic attacks like the bombing of the Pan Am Flight 103, the USS *Cole*, Khobar Towers, the first World Trade Center bombing, we decided that that had to stop. We decided the only way to end these attacks was going into the Middle East and let it be known that we would no longer tolerate regimes that encouraged terrorism and shunned the rules most in the civilized world choose to abide by.

That was the right decision then. It remains the right decision today.

DEMOCRATS WORKING TO EXPAND OPPORTUNITY TO MINIMUM WAGE WORKERS

(Mrs. JONES of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, House Democrats want to give minimum-wage workers their first pay raise in 9 years. Can you imagine working 9 years and never have a pay raise? Gas went up, milk went up, housing went up, electricity went up, and the House Republicans are doing everything they can to avoid the issue.

Last week, seven Republicans on the House Appropriations Committee voted with Democrats to increase the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 as part of the Labor-HHS appropriations bill, but now the leaders of the Republican Party refuse to bring this bill to the floor, hoping they can skirt the issue until after election.

Can you imagine if you had to wait till after an election to get some more money to buy that gas that is \$3 a gallon?

The Republican leaders must have done a lot of arm twisting over the weekend because when Democrats called for an increase in the minimum wage on another appropriations bill yesterday, not one of those seven who were with us last week, who had the guts to be with us last week, were with us yesterday.

I just cannot understand why the House Republicans refuse to allow a floor vote on minimum wage. They will not do it because they know the American people will not vote for them if they do not increase the rate.

SENIOR INDEPENDENCE ACT

(Mr. EHLERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, today I want to commend Chairman McKEON of the Energy and Workforce Committee and Congressman TIBERI, who chairs the relevant subcommittee of that committee.

Today, we are going to discuss on suspension a bill that they have created, the Senior Independence Act, which is the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. They have done excellent work, and I also want to thank Congressman DANNY DAVIS, who has worked with me and I have worked with him to make certain that we also address mental health issues in this bill.

Last winter, I had the pleasure of meeting Suzann Ogland-Hand, who is one of my constituents, and whom I nominated for the White House Conference on Aging. She is a mental health expert, and she helps large numbers of elderly people deal with their mental health problems.

Clearly, this is an issue whose time has come, and I am very pleased that the bill we will be taking up today under suspension includes provisions that will take care of the mental health needs of so many Americans, large and small, and deal with all the different issues that the elderly face.

I commend, again, Mr. McKEON for bringing this bill to the floor.

□ 1030

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A WEEK MAKES

(Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, one of my favorite scriptures is, "Let the work I have done speak for me." Mr. Speaker, what a difference a week makes. Last week seven House Republicans joined Democrats in supporting an increase in the minimum wage. Yesterday, when the measure came up in another appropriation bill, they certainly changed their minds and joined the rest of the Republicans in ignoring the needs of 7 million hard-working minimum-wage workers, which begs the question: What exactly happened over the last 7 days to make those seven Republicans change their minds?

They certainly didn't spend any time with minimum-wage workers, otherwise they would have heard how the